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THE
LOVE OF PLEASURE
INCONSISTENT WITH REASON,
AND WITH THE
PECULIAR SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

A SERMON,
PREACHED IN THE NEW CHURCH OF DUMFRIES,
IN THE YEAR ———,

By A PREACHER OF THE GOSPEL.

— *And some said, what will this babler say?*
ACTS, xvii. 18.

EDINBURGH:

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M DCC LXXII.

THE LOVE OF THE WARRIOR

INCONSISTENT WITH HONOR

A PLAY IN TWO ACTS

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WARRIOR"

A. S. E. R. M. O. N.

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DEDICATION.

T O

THE HONOURABLE

THE PROVOST AND MAGI-
STRATES OF THE TOWN OF
DUMFRIES.

GENTLEMEN,

INSTEAD of copying the usual form of Dedications, and giving you a list of your own virtues ; I shall confine myself to a much narrower field, and tell you, with all the simplicity which is natural to me, what the reasons were by which I was prevailed upon to make the following sermon public.

IN the first place, I think it is a subject to which the attention of mankind, especially of such of them as live together in large societies, cannot be too often recalled. This may serve as an apology, even if the reader should discover nothing new in my performance, for publishing upon an argument which has been so often considered, and by our best writers. Secondly, the sermon itself has occasioned, I am told, a good deal of speculation, and raised some curiosity. To conclude the dispute, therefore, or rather to let people see what they have been disputing about, I have put the whole matter fairly into their hands. They will now be able to judge with more certainty.—

tainty.—In short, the town wished to see the discourse, and I have frankly printed it upon the first hint. With regard to my own opinion of it, I have sufficiently discovered my partiality, Gentlemen! by inscribing it to you.

THERE are an infinite number of sermons in print, it must be confessed; and this adds to the heap. How they sell, or what good they do, is, I believe, a melancholy enough subject of speculation both to booksellers and preachers. I hope, however, it will be considered as no small recommendation of my sermon, that (without any design of mine) it partakes not a little of the nature of a *romance*; inasmuch as the reformation

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tion it proposes is thought by many to be nearly as chimerical as the metamorphosis of Humphry Clinker, or the schemes of Gulliver.

I CAN think of but one objection against it which carries any appearance of plausibility. Some may, perhaps, think that some of the antidotes against pleasure which it suggests, are rather too familiar. I am, however, of a very different opinion. I scruple not to affirm, that it would be much for the advantage of society if every preacher, when he means to check a vice, instead of ascending into the clouds, or running into cant and enthusiasm, would lay down, in a few plain words, (and the plainer the better)

such

such schemes of reformation as are really practicable. This I have attempted. My specifics may do good ; or if, upon trial, they should be found to fail, (and no man should condemn them without trial) the age will at least be no worse than when I found it.

ONE thing I could wish may be attended to. The discourse was not originally composed for a common audience, nor indeed for the pulpit. I wrote for my peers ; and, when I delivered it in the New Church of Dumfries, I still insist upon it, that I paid no greater compliment to my hearers than they were entitled to.

THE human mind is a mixture of greatness and ridicule. If it cannot practise it will approve. The advocate of virtue has a party in the breasts of his hearers, which assures him of their esteem. Levity itself is serious in the absence of temptation, and a man must be bribed to act meanly.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

your most devoted,

and most obedient servant,

THE AUTHOR.

THE
LOVE OF PLEASURE, &c.

ROMANS, viii. 6. 7.

For to be carnally minded is death ;—because the carnal mind is enmity against God.

THE words we have now read form, by themselves, a complete, moral proposition. Without tracing their connection, therefore, with any other argument, we shall consider them in this light, and recommend them to your attention.

IN the first place, then, let us consider what it is the apostle means by the carnal mind. To determine this, it will be no small help if we attend, for a moment, to the train of ideas which passed in his own mind when he wrote this, and indeed most of his epistles. The light of Christianity was but newly diffused in the world. In propagating this light, St. Paul had been an emi-

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nent instrument. It was, therefore, natural for him frequently to look back upon his ministry ; and to contemplate, with a generous delight, the success of his disinterested labours. The two great views which this speculation suggested to him were the very different conditions of mankind before and after the Christian revelation. To these he is perpetually soliciting the attention of his reader ; they appear to be the capital ideas which had taken possession of his mind ; even in all his other arguments, however foreign, he is continually wandering to this ; and, wherever his subject allows him scope, he contemplates it with complacency. Now the vice which was most conspicuous in the world before the appearance of Christianity, especially among the Romans, was an abandoned love of pleasure ; which hardly knew the distinction of sex, and was limited by no law but gratification. It is unnecessary to enlarge on a fact to which so many causes contributed. The nature itself of their religion, the infamous characters of their gods, the increase of riches and luxury in the capital of the empire, supported by the descriptive reasonings of an agreeable philosophy,

had

had removed every restraint from all ranks, and given authority to dissipation. Against this universal corruption, the Christian religion directed its greatest efforts. The most conspicuous effect of it, wherever it was received, was the introducing of a purer morality, and either recalling men to the primitive simplicity of virtue, or refining and exalting their sentiments. This, when stripped of the mystical dress with which mere divines have obscured it, is the apostle's capital idea in the comparison he draws between the two worlds; and is forcibly described under the several metaphors * of the old man and the new, the carnal and the spiritual mind, the works of darkness and the works of light, the law of sin in his members warring against the law of his mind, the flesh and the spirit, the deadness of the body to sin, and the life of the spirit to righteousness. Hence too the apostle of the Gentiles thought it necessary to give an eminent instance of mortification in his own person; with a view to enforce his precepts, and that the world might have the example of Paul to contem-

* The author would not be understood to mean that this is the apostle's *only* idea in these metaphors.

plate in opposition to that of Jupiter. No woman was ever seen to follow *him*, either avowing herself as his wife, or claiming kindred with him as a sister. From the moment of his conversion to Christianity, he abstained from all commerce with the sex. Nor could so severe a continence proceed from any other cause than the desire he had to stem the profligacy of the age, and to convince the world, by his example, that the most ungovernable passions may be conquered. He appears, indeed, from his writings, to have been naturally of a warm constitution, and to have possessed all the ideas common to his species; but these ideas, which in other men are the sources of evil, served, in Paul, only to adorn his diction, and to furnish him with metaphors.—Though the carnal mind, therefore, might, by certain rules of interpretation, be made to comprehend many different species of vice; we shall, for these reasons, and likewise that we may not wander in too wide a field, confine it, in this discourse, to the * love of pleasure only. In our medita-

* I suppose it will be unnecessary to inform my readers that this phrase, when it occurs in this discourse, is always to be understood in a criminal sense.

tions on this subject, we shall just prosecute Paul's argument, and shew, in as few words as possible, that the carnal mind, in this age as well as the apostle's, is really enmity against God.

I AM abundantly sensible of the ridicule I should be exposed to, were I seriously to undertake, before the enlightened spirits of the present age, the defence of so unfashionable an argument. I confess, in a cause like this, I engage at great disadvantage. The cool dictates of reason are vainly opposed to arguments addressed directly to the constitution,—to the pressing persuasions of youth, and the eloquence of beauty. It is an advantage to the orator when the cause itself which he defends has the effect to warm him,—when the very arguments he employs, touch the springs of nature, and put his spirits in motion. In this situation, every advocate for pleasure meets the man of virtue. He worships the divinity of nature, invokes the powers of love and gaiety, opens his heart to elegant pleasure, and smiles at the superstition of those dreaming spirits who think happiness a crime, or that the Deity will punish us for acting agreeably to principles which
he

he himself has implanted in our constitution.

BUT surely the *management* of these principles is greatly in our own power, and for *this* part at least of the system we are accountable. As well may the murderer dispute the justice of his sentence. The plea of necessity, if it be a solid one, justifies every crime equally; and love is not a more certain part of our constitution than resentment and revenge. Shall the excess of every passion be judged worthy of punishment, and shall the ruins of innocence form an amiable exception? But I would meet my antagonist upon his own ground. Independent of its deserts, there is something in the nature of the habit itself which is pernicious. Its first effect is to destroy those feelings of delicacy which *become* a man, but in a woman are essential. It likewise destroys the affection of love itself, and is fatal to the source it sprang from. Is there an object on earth more delightful than a faithful and generous attachment? Is there a character more capitally deficient than that to which these tender sentiments are strangers? What, then, shall we think of the man who, being originally possessed of these feelings,

feelings, has destroyed, them by acts of intemperance, and left nothing in the breast, where such amiable inhabitants resided, but grossness and perfidy? Yet this is the man of pleasure. Indifferent to every woman, he feels a momentary rage for all; and while he has lost all respect for the sex, he is as incapable of love as of fidelity. Will a man like this make a tender husband, an affectionate father, or a respectable friend? What opinion must we have of his honesty, whose understanding is employed in forming snares for innocence? Or of his heart, who can turn, without emotion, from the tears of deserted beauty? But the fate of a lovely woman, in such circumstances, is, if possible, still more affecting. Blooming in innocence and health, the pride of her family, the delight of every eye, she comes forward to the world, an unsuspecting victim. View her in her next stage,—her delicacy extinguished, her honour lost, her beauty tarnished, and her whole soul as gross and prostituted as her conduct. Is not that habit of mind, then, enmity against God, which injures his fairest work, and destroys the graceful, and noble fabric of humanity? The man of pleasure may

may affect to rally, but, in a case like this, ridicule becomes the object of compassion.

If there is a providence which superintends this beautiful world, it must certainly delight in the order of its own works; and every agent, which deforms the fair arrangement, must be accounted an enemy. But if order be an object of delight in the material system, the sight of happiness among men must afford an higher species of pleasure; and every passion which tends to destroy this, and convert human life into a scene of mourning and misery, must excite still deeper detestation. Need I stop to observe that this is the uniform effect of licentious principles? I might appeal to the experience of families,—to the tears of humbled beauty, betrayed by the friend it trusted, to the wounds of honour, and the distracted breasts of mothers. How many happy, domestic societies, who fondly flattered themselves that no distress could find a way into their little circle, have, by the admission of a man of pretended honour and sentiment, under the mask of tenderness and honourable affection, at the moment when they caressed, and loaded him with the friendship he solicited, been converted

verted into scenes of desolation? It is needless to multiply words on this subject. Every man's own observation may furnish him with examples.

BUT it may be objected, that the evil here is accidental; that still there is nothing positively vicious in the action itself; and that it is the compassion of mankind which renders it detestable.—I would make the supposition, then, that the spirit of profligacy were diffused equally through all ranks,—that every woman was a prostitute, and every man a villain. Would this make an amiable society? Would it be an object even of *human* complacency? The advocates for pleasure themselves are for confining it to a select circle. Licentious as they are, they are shocked at the thought of *universal* corruption, and acknowledge that the stability of society is established upon the virtue of the multitude. They only plead for an exception in their own favour, and that such enlightened spirits as themselves should not be bound by vulgar regulations. They consider not that no distinctions can convert vice into virtue;—that no part of a society can appear pleasing either to God or man who have di-

vested themselves of honour and fidelity. And this is the case of the votaries of pleasure. For with what trust does that woman deserve to be honoured who has broken her most solemn engagements? Can we think her capable of friendship, who has injured her dearest friend, in the tenderest point? Or can we place confidence in her fidelity, who has been already treacherous?—When we bring the injury home to ourselves, and make it our own case, the argument is still more irresistible. Where is the father, who will justify the seduction of his child? Or the husband, who can hear of his wife's infidelity, and not be sensible of injury? Is chastity, then, only a virtue in your own wives and daughters? Or are the eternal laws of morality the same, when divested of circumstances, and independent of particular attachments?

THE love of pleasure is enmity against God, not only because it destroys the amiable human feelings, and introduces affliction and misery into society; but also, because it is an enemy to that serious frame of mind which is the parent of virtue and religion. As the objects of religion and virtue are
great,

great, the mind which contemplates them must be sublime and solemn. Levity of behaviour, dissipation of thought, are inconsistent with that intense ardour of constitution which swells the soul with great designs, and makes it labour after perfection. They are inconsistent with every great exertion, and every generous sacrifice. I know it is a topic commonly insisted on in this age, that religion is gay, and morality facetious; that they have no connection with severity, that they are engrossed with the common incidents of life, and lead their votaries successively from relaxation to pleasure, from business to amusement. Such is the language of those genteel moralists, who either mean it as an apology for their own conduct; or, despairing to stem the torrent, endeavour to preserve at least the *name* of religion in the world, by accommodating it to the temper of the period. This pleasant religion, this simpering virtue, which fits so easy, and is so uniform, on men of every character, is not certainly that principle which leads up the immortal spirit to excellence. I am as great an enemy to gloominess as most people; but I can never be persuaded that the

sublime spirit of religion can be reconciled to that levity of mind which teaches a man to consider the most serious subjects as sources of mirth, which diminishes his admiration of what is great, as well as his detestation of what is base, and, consequently, destroys, imperceptibly, in his own mind, the distinction between vice and virtue. And are not these the uniform characters of an age of pleasure? Are they not the characters of our own? There never, in any period, was less *virtue*, and more *sentiment* than in the present. Conscious of our own deficiency in active virtue we endeavour to impose upon mankind and upon ourselves, by a copious exhibition of general maxims and fine thoughts, which serve no other purpose than to display our own agreeable convivial talents, and purchase for ourselves, from fools, and at the cheapest price, the characters of men of refined feelings and delicate sentiments. Every appearance in life is become false or superficial. Conversation is substituted for action, and sentiment for virtue. Language has forsaken its channel, and, instead of pouring from the heart and affections, it proceeds, in a tortured stream,

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from the understanding or imagination. Life is become one entire piece of affectation. Almost in every case, we are obliged to employ a set of ostensible motives ; we conceal our real ones, because we have just virtue enough left to be ashamed of them ; we understand one another, however, perfectly ; and all our finesse is exhausted in the issue of a few plausible speeches, which deceive nobody, without answering even any one solid, political purpose. In the mean time, we support the appearance. As we find our honesty fail, we become louder in our assertions ; indignation is succeeded by noise ; the phantom of virtue is still pushed forward, and the sacred names of justice and conscience are employed, because a speech cannot be made without them, and to cover our particular attachments. In an age like this, when a man of real honesty makes his appearance, he is dreaded or detested. We say, with justice, that we do not know when we have or want him ; because *his* conscience is uniform, and, consequently approves *our* actions, and supports *our* measures, by accident.—Such is the picture of the age, and
such

such the consequences of a spirit of licentiousness.

THE carnal mind is an enemy to religion, and, consequently, to God, likewise in another view. The mind of man is undoubtedly formed for enjoyment. Pleasure is the spring of our actions, and whatever touches not this, will not affect us. In the enjoyment or pursuit of happiness, we waste our faculties, and exhaust our passions. The mind is, however, limited. One set of objects, one train of ideas, is sufficient to engross it; and when it is once habituated to receive pleasure from a particular source, it returns instinctively to the same source, it exhausts its endeavours there, and never thinks of directing its activity to any other quarter. This is more uniformly the case when the pleasures it possesses are of an intoxicating nature, or when they are inconsistent with the admission of others which, though more sublime, are yet perhaps, from long disuse, less agreeable to the workings of our constitution. Now this seems to be the case, we may securely pronounce it to be the case, with sensual pleasure. How few can ever be recalled to virtue who have once tasted the intoxicating draught?

draught? How few return to the walks of reason, or the lessons of wisdom, who have once silenced their first scruples, and passed the fatal boundary? But that the pleasures of religion and of vice should exist in the same mind, and at the same time, is impossible. How can we reconcile the idea of heaven with a brothel? Or how is it possible for a man, whose mind is engrossed with a *woman**, to think of an *angel*? Though there were no inconsistency in the ideas themselves, the mind is too narrow to admit them at once. The fervour of our passions, the strength of our understanding, is exhausted; and our very disappointments make us rage with new desire, and seek endless repetitions of the same unsatisfying pleasure. What a wreck of virtue, what a waste of noble faculties, is here? That vigour of mind, thus exhausted in the pursuit of pleasure, to what sublime heights of excellence might it urge the soul were it diverted into a proper channel? The same ardour of passion which makes a man a profligate, might raise him to the first eminence in virtue. As it is now

* The author no doubt means a bad woman and a good angel.

employed, it serves only to debauch his heart the more, and to plunge him still deeper in enormity.

HITHERTO I have supposed the man of pleasure to be a man of abilities and refinement. But by what name shall I call *him*, who, without genius to form an intrigue, without spirit to conduct it, without fancy to anticipate pleasure, without elegance to render it an affair of taste, without vanity to enjoy it, sneaks into the lap of lewdness, and drudges in her temple from no motive but the mere momentary gratification? * * * *

THERE is an observation which occurs to me here, and which I must not omit. It contributes to set the opposition between the love of pleasure, and the spirit of religion in a still clearer light. The greater part of Christians are accustomed, in the earlier part of their lives, to consider the Bible as a revelation from God; and they see an indulgence in criminal pleasures numbered expressly among the vices it prohibits.—When, therefore, it becomes necessary for the ease of a man's own mind to justify and defend these

these pleasures, he is naturally led to decry the revelation which prohibits them, and to reject that whole system, one part of which he flatters himself he has discovered to be fictitious. In doing this, he unavoidably removes one great barrier against vice of every kind. For, having concluded this to be no vice which religion had taught him to think a vice, he forms the same opinion of the rest, and soon applies his conclusion to every duty which he may find it convenient to violate. A state of future punishments and rewards falls the first victim to these notions. He either reasons against the absolute existence of it, or he modifies it in such a manner as to render it, in every case, harmless. Such is the history of the reasoning part of mankind. With regard to those who are not qualified to reason upon these subjects, it is still, if possible, more pernicious. Having once broken what they had been accustomed to think a duty, and violated, if I may so express myself, the *entireness* of their virtue; they consider themselves as already vicious,—their abhorrence of *every* vice diminishes with their abhorrence of *this*, and they soon become, in every respect, abandon-

ed.—It were better, like the inhabitants of the East, that they never were taught to regard abstinence from pleasure as a virtue at all, than, regarding it as such, to become criminal in their own minds by the breach of it, and, along with it, to lose their respect for every other obligation.

THE arguments are endless which might be adduced to shew that the carnal mind is enmity against God. I shall mention but one more, and it is that cast of dissingenuity which it often stamps upon the mind, that habit of insincerity and baseness which is necessary to cover it from the world. Whatever degrees of wickedness we may have reached, vice cannot yet endure the light, and is forced, from the consciousness of her desert, still to skulk in a corner. Add to this, that there is a certain dignity of character required by some particular professions, and a semblance of virtue by others, which render it necessary to dissemble. What a train of vices then follow? What a hateful habit of concealment, what equivocal conduct, what mean subterfuge, what unworthy art is necessary to cover the emotions of a heart fearful of discovery, suspicious of be-

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ing detected, and where all the openness of virtue, and noble simplicity of innocence are lost? What pleasure, what success, what dark enjoyment can atone for this? After having reaped your stolen pleasures, how do you propose to appear before mankind? Can you do it with the same face, the same boldness of virtue with which you left them last? Are you not fearful that a bird of the air has whispered the secret, that you have discovered it in your sleep, that it has got air, and is now public with aggravations? Do not you see by the looks of those you meet that they know it, that they are acquainted even with the circumstances, that they keep silence in mercy to your feelings, till it burst upon you at once, and overwhelm you? Believe me, the servants were listening upon the stairs, they heard strange noises, they looked through the hole of the door, they saw nothing because the light was extinguished, they made their remarks upon it in the kitchen. Your late hours have been long observed, you have been watched, you have been traced, all your motions have been suspected ever since that early morning when an honest labouring man, who had got up to observe the horns

of the moon, saw you sneak out of that infamous alley. I speak at present to the man whose situation renders it necessary for him to keep measures with the public. Filled with apprehensions like these, he comes into society. The terror of his mind is painted on his countenance. His eye is upon guard, his position is unsteady, his conversation desultory, his manner fawning, and his whole behaviour a silent petition that you would disbelieve the reports which he suspects are gone abroad concerning him, in case you have heard them. Who, who would be that man? Who would forfeit the peace, the honesty, the confidence of his own mind, who would be a day, an hour in that dreadful situation, for all the pleasures which vice ever bestowed, or the imagination coveted?

Thus I have attempted to describe the effects of pleasure upon the heart, and to shew, from this, and from a variety of other arguments, that the carnal mind is enmity against God. It would be superfluous to enlarge upon the inference, that, therefore, to be carnally minded must be death. It must be death to the mind itself, to the character, and, I may add, to the constitution ;—it
must

must be death, because it introduces misery into society, and because it offends God.

BUT, as it would be insulting the weakness of humanity to describe the disorder without, at the same time, pointing out the antidote; I shall conclude this discourse with offering a few humble directions, which will be of use, I hope, to regulate our constitutions, and which I would submit, with all deference, to the judgment of those who are better acquainted with this subject.

It must be confessed, and I mention it in favour of those who have been foiled by it, that *love* is the most powerful, as well as the most natural of all the passions. It is ushered into the breast by the most pleasing emotions. Kindness, complacency, delight, joy, tenderness, sincerity, rapture, and the romantic effusions of the most elegant friendship, are its companions. These march before it, they plead its admission with persuasive eloquence, and introduce into the gentlest, and the best hearts, (for they alone can receive it) the unsuspected, and blushing guest. Happy, could it preserve its character, and remain in its primitive and native innocence.

innocence. The mind is then in its best state ; its generous affections are awakened, and all its feelings improved and refined by the amiable inhabitant. But this tranquil state is not formed for duration. This guest, erewhile so gentle, so bashful, and so innocent, is soon seized with fits of strange impatience. Then succeeds the rage of desire, the frantic wildness of jealousy, the ferment of the constitution ; till the passions, raised to their height, burst all restraint, subvert the whole man, and break into society in a torrent of licentiousness. Then indeed, it becomes difficult to stem their progress.

YET, I must observe, they may be stemmed. It is not impossible. Touched with remorse for innocence betrayed, smarting perhaps from the consequences of his own folly, or struck with a ray of light from the great Parent himself of the universe ; the sinner may forsake his way, the man of pleasure may reform. When this happens, let us again cordially welcome him into the society of the virtuous. Let us admit of his reformation, and replace him in our confidence. He will even be the better for his experience, and act a more discreet, as well

as more virtuous part during the remainder of his life. God himself is satisfied with repentance, why should not man? He hath even appointed it as a duty. Will we be hard hearted to those whom the Lord hath forgiven? There are few men, perhaps, the earlier part of whose lives has not been marked with irregularities of some kind. There is a period in the life of every man of sense at which he may be said to be * regenerated; a period at which he begins to reflect, at which he corrects his own levities, and strikes out a new, and more judicious plan of conduct. From that moment he is a new man, he commences the object of our esteem, and his errors are forgotten. So may the man of pleasure.—As, however, it is better, if possible, to prevent, than correct extravagance of any kind, I shall offer a few words more with this view. The whole observations I have been able to make on this subject, may be condensed into the six following.

1st, THE first thing I would recommend

* The author means not here to meddle with the theological doctrine of regeneration, strictly so called. That is so clearly laid down in the gospel of John as to supersede all necessity of explanation.

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to you as an antidote against the love of pleasure is—*marriage*. If St. Paul's assertion be a just one, that it is better to marry than to burn; then certainly it is much better to marry than to do mischief. But I would not be thought to recommend marriage merely as being the least of two evils. It is an honourable institution in itself. It is appointed by God for the wise purposes of preserving the order, and continuing the existence of society. As such, I now seriously mention it. It can never be generally neglected in any state without the most pernicious consequences. Disorder, dishonour, and debauchery, never fail to succeed it. And if this be the case, what have those to answer for to God and society, who either wilfully or peevishly neglect this institution? Who trifle away the precious season of youth in solitude? Who, because perhaps they may have met with a disappointment or two, take a prejudice against the whole amiable sex, and make a horrid vow of celibacy? Ah my friends! let not revenge possess your bosoms, when gentler affections call you. Make no rash resolutions, I beseech you. The sex are under our protection, we ought to make allowances

ances for them, and to view their conduct in the best light. It was certainly weak in them to refuse you ;—I grant it,—but at the very time they did it, did they not acknowledge your merit, and lament the caprice or depravity of their own taste which obliged them to reject you ? Why, then, will you give way to resentment, and punish *yourselves* on * account of *their* weakness ? Supposing you to be now after a long warfare, masters of your passions, and that you have attained to the monkish virtue of abstinence in its perfection ; will you, can you cruelly resolve to rest there ? What an injury is this to society ? What a pernicious example to the rising generation ? What a manifest resisting of the ordinance of God ? I would not have people rush together inconsiderately ; but I would have them always marry when it is not absolutely inconvenient,—when there is not something, in short, in the case which renders it positively imprudent.

2dly, THE second thing I would recommend as an antidote against the love of plea-

* Consider besides that there are some things which are the proper objects of resentment, and other things which are not.

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sure,

sure, is that a man would take the pains to convince himself thoroughly of the truth of the Christian religion. The arguments drawn against this vice from the side of reason may be evaded, or encountered by other arguments taken from the same source. The mind will never be at a loss to find topics in support of *any* argument, and human ingenuity often shines most upon the wrong side of a question. This will still be the case when the conclusion depends upon the mind itself. There will always be various opinions, according to the different tempers of minds, and all of them will be ingeniously defended. But the Christian religion decides the matter at once, and excludes all private reasoning upon the subject. It expressly condemns both adultery and fornication. It condemns these vices by the authority of God. No man, then, who believes that this revelation is from God, will reason in their defence; no man whose mind is properly impressed with this belief, will be, at least, habitually, guilty of them. This is really a circumstance in our religion which distinguishes it from every religion which exists, or has existed in the world. All the Eastern religions

religions allow latitude to this passion. But this is not the case of our religion. Christianity is really express.—And the reason of the difference between it and other religions, in this respect is obvious. At the time of our Saviour's appearance, licentiousness was arrived at its greatest height. This was the great point in morals which called for a reformation. Our religion was, therefore, particular upon *this* point; and every man, who wants to be rightly informed upon the subject, ought to be at pains to examine the truth of the revelation itself which treats of it.—If he finds *that* false, he may give up Christianity. If he means to be a Christian, he must relinquish licentiousness.

3dly, THE directions I have hitherto suggested chiefly regard those whose understandings are sufficiently confirmed by years, or who are established in the world. But there is another part of my audience who are in a more helpless condition, and for whom I would willingly do something.—I mean that part of them who, on account of their youth and other circumstances, are averse to *think*, and yet find it inconvenient to *marry*. The situation of these persons is truly deplorable,

and I sincerely sympathise with them. Their case is not only sad, but critical, and has a serious demand upon us. The third thing, therefore, which I would recommend as an antidote against the spirit of licentiousness is, that every young man, at the time he first feels the soft sentiments, attach himself to some virtuous young woman, and make her the mistress of his affections. This antidote is of more universal use than the foregoing. Every body has not abilities sufficient to enable him to examine the evidences of Christianity; but every body has it in his power to look out for some amiable female, and, at least for *some* time, to fix his heart on her. I would not, indeed, have him, (in this case) always marry, or even mention his passion to her. This might be imprudent, and ruinous to them both, Let this be deferred to a proper season. But I would have him consider her in his own mind as the center of his wishes and pursuits. This will effectually prevent his desires from straying. He will regard every act of licentiousness in himself as treason against the idol of his heart. He will endeavour to purchase her esteem by a noble conduct, and be fearful to forfeit it by baseness.

baseness. In short, a passion like this ennobles the mind, exalts the character, refines the affections, and is, in every view, a most excellent preservative against dissipation.

4thly, THE fourth thing which I would recommend as an antidote against licentiousness is—*action*. There is not a stronger prompter of the evil affections than *idleness*. It is the great source of all loose thoughts, vain desires, whimsical fancies, wandering visions, and peccant motions. It engenders curiosity, it produces vapours; it is the cause of languishments, depressions, low spirits, palpitations at the heart, heats in the blood, flushings, flutters, flurries, the spleen, the hysterics. It brings on low pulses, weak nerves, startings, swimings, wishes, stretchings, cards, dice, scheming of all kinds, romping, routs, balls, masquerades, violent passions, and all the other notable symptoms which distinguish the great world. It leads to drunkenness, dozing, stupidity, tædor, foolish talking, idle jesting, superfluous company, ridiculous frolics, drams, snuff, strong waters, loose houses; which end in dropsies, retchings, shakings, loss of appetite, invincible habits of private drinking, quarrels, bruising,

bruifings, diseases, doctors, incapacities, with a total loss of industry and application. “Ye are idle,” said Pharaoh to the children of Israel, “ye are idle, therefore ye say let us go “and do sacrifice.” In like manner, though with more reason, may *we* say to the debauchees of the present age, ye are *idle*, therefore your thoughts wander after *women*. Go, therefore, now, and *work*. I say go work,—Labour, toil, sweat, brace your nerves, give play to your lungs, and drive out these vain cogitations. If you follow any particular business, give application to it;—be regular in your hours of attendance, make it not a by-work, be systematical in your transactions, be mechanical in your motions, go to bed early, that you may be able to rise in the morning. Only—guard against one thing—suffer not yourselves to be seized with the spirit of avarice, for this is a worse spirit than the other. If your fortune places you above business,—ride, walk, run, hunt, fish, fence, swim, you may even dance; inure yourselves to the rigours of the weather, to cold, to heat, to fasting, to fatigue; find, invent, create employment for yourselves; have always some point in view; drive it, urge it, be earnest about

about it ; when, by the united powers of ability and perseverance, you have carried it, fix upon some other point, (he is unhappy who has not a point in view,) and let it be such a one as is attended with difficulties, that you may have the pleasure of surmounting them.—If you possess capacity, lay plans for the good of your country. Study to understand commerce, manufactures, navigations ; enter into the theories of stocks, of annuities, of the balance of trade, of free ports, of exclusive companies. See if you can discover the north-west passage. Provide yourself with an apparatus of philosophical instruments. Examine the mechanical powers, the properties of air, of water, of steam ; learn the construction and use of fire-engines, and ventilators, and thunder-rods ; make yourself acquainted with the history of electricity, study astronomy, get telescopes, take a voyage to the south, and observe the transit of Venus. Or turn your attention to the art of *war* ;—to fortification, to encamping, to entrenching, to gunnery, to attack and defence, to marches, countermarches, battles, sieges, advantageous posts, paying, feeding, cloathing your troops, subsisting them in an enemy's

enemy's country, intercepting retreats, cutting off convoys, passing rivers, making treaties, amusing them with false movements, and whatever else a consummate general ought to be acquainted with. It would be strange if you could not find some method of employing your thoughts, and keeping them from running upon nonsense. If this be still too little, go into the cabinet;—study the interests of the different states, form alliances, plan revolutions, (only be not guilty of treason) preserve the balance of power, commence *politician*, in short, rather than be *idle*.—If your genius or inclination do not carry you into those tracts, yet still a man of fortune can never want noble employment in a domestic sphere. Is not the field of agriculture open? May he not set a great example of improvement to the country? May he not cultivate his grounds, plant his trees, divide his gardens? May he not advance money for these purposes, at moderate interest, to those who want it? Is it not in his power, by proper encouragement, and setting an example of industry, to make the country assume a new appearance; to convert it from savage to civilized, from a desert to a paradise?—
Or

Or is there no field for the nobler exertions of generosity and compassion? Can he not relieve the distressed, and protect the weak? Are there not widows to be comforted, and orphans to be taken home? Are there not industrious families who want a stock to begin with? Is there not many a lovely young woman whose charms would be improved by a little fortune? And is there not many an honest young man who would enter into the honourable state of matrimony if he had but a small matter to set up upon? How many families might you make happy? From how many soft eyes might you draw the tear of gratitude? What smiles of complacency would meet you wherever you went? What looks of joy, what silent prayers, what blessings would attend your progress? He must have a strange soul who can live only for himself. Would not this be better than staggering through the streets at midnight, or spending your money in a bawdy-house? Or is the immortal mind of man capable of no nobler enjoyment than rattling the dice, or swearing at a gaming-table? Would it not even be better than squeezing your dependants, and forcing them to curse you? Are you rich? Do

E

you

you possess influence? Ask your heart, then, how you have employed it. Where is the man who blesses you? Where is the family who calls you their benefactor? Is there none—none? What, then, has the great man been doing with his fortune?—He has been purchasing girls, hiring barbers, paying French cooks, bribing voters, maintaining taylor, pampering valets, and lacqueys, and waiting men, and waiting women, and blacks, and dogs, and eunuchs; he has given balls and assemblies, and masquerades, and seen plays, and routs, and horse races, and bear baitings, and cock fights—* * * * * Good Heaven! This is a subject worthy of the indignation of eloquence. I feel my spirits rise, and would expatiate upon it as it deserves, had I not confined myself, in these directions, to plainness.

5thly, ANOTHER thing I would recommend as an antidote against licentiousness is a simple method of living, especially a simple diet. One great cause of licentiousness among us is undoubtedly that rage of luxury and high living which has infatuated all ranks, and thrown the nation into a fever. The passions and the animal œconomy are closely connected, and what pampers the one, must inflame

inflamm the other. From what proceed those hectic affections, those tumults of the blood, and high tide of the spirits ; which intermit and rise, and sicken and * swell by intervals ; but from high food, high seasonings, strong meats, stronger drinks, wines, spiceries, and foreign infusions ? I shall be short upon this article, because I would not invade the province of the physician. But if we would confine ourselves to a plain diet, and the wholesome beverages of our own country, (not to be more particular) our inclinations would be more temperate, nor would the carnal mind be so pampered as we find it is.

Lastly, and above all,—LET us beseech God that he will give us the assistance of his Holy Spirit to enable us to subdue this, and every other irregular affection. Our own strength, God knows, is not to be depended on. “Lead us not into temptation,” is part of that excellent prayer which was composed as our model. The more I consider this petition, the more I admire it. It discovers the most intimate knowledge of human na-

* These must be understood as co-operating with the other causes already mentioned.

ture. It supposes that much, if not every thing, depends upon the *temptation*. Con-
scious, therefore, of our own weakness, let
us incessantly pray that we may not be led
into temptation. Let us not too hardily ex-
pose ourselves to it. Certain defeat is the
general consequence. Farther, let us watch
our hearts in their first motions. Let us even,
if it be necessary, make a covenant with our
eyes. Finally, let him that standeth, take
heed lest he fall; and, if he has already fal-
len, let him repent and sin no more. *Amen.*

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